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LETTER DATED 28 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BURUNDI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you a note verbale dated 27 October 1997 concerning a further act of aggression against Burundi on its south-eastern frontier. Attached as an appendix to that note verbale is a note verbale addressed to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania.

I should be grateful if you would have this note verbale distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gamaliel NDARUZANIYE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Note verbale dated 27 October 1997 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi addressed to the Secretary-General

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to its note verbale dated 27 October 1997 addressed to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to protest about the acts of armed aggression directed once again against the territory of Burundi by the Tanzanian army, has the honour to inform him of the following:

Burundi has just been subjected once again to an act of armed aggression by the Tanzanian army during the night of 26 to 27 October 1997, in other words one month to the day after the attacks perpetrated against Burundi by that same army on 26, 27 and 28 September 1997.

The Tanzanian army has just orchestrated a series of attacks against the territory of Burundi in the villages of Mukerezi, 2 kilometres from the Tanzanian frontier, Gihoro and Mugina in Makamba province.

The chronology of the events is as follows:

1. On 27 October 1997, at 3 a.m.: attack on the village of Mukerezi by armed elements on foot, coming from Kagunga.

2. At 5 a.m.: artillery bombardment of the village of Mukerezi.

3. At 6 a.m.: start of the bombardment of Gihoro from Kigo, a Tanzanian village.

4. At 8 a.m.: bombardment of Mugina by artillery installed in the Tanzanian police station at Manyovu.

5. At 11 a.m.: simultaneous bombardment of all these villages.

6. Throughout the day, the Tanzanian navy constantly bombarded the village of Mukerezi.

7. In addition, an imposing deployment of the Tanzanian army was observed at the frontier.

8. In the afternoon of the same day, armed elements, under cover of artillery, attacked the village of Kabonga before being driven back by the Burundian armed forces.

The provisional casualty list from all these acts of aggression is as follows:

Two soldiers and a dozen civilians, including women and children, killed;

Three soldiers and several civilians wounded;

Considerable material damage.

The utilization of Tanzanian territory, the use of patrol boats of the Tanzanian army, the firing positions of the artillery installed in the Tanzanian police station itself confirm, if need be, the responsibility of the Tanzanian army in these acts of aggression.

The Government of Burundi requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations:

1. To do everything possible to put an end to these attacks.

2. To help to restore communications between the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and Burundi.

3. To organize the necessary mediation between the two countries with a view to the normalization of the situation.

4. To establish a neutral observer commission along the common frontier.

5. To follow up the request of the Government of Burundi concerning the Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania.

Appendix

Note verbale dated 27 October 1997 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania and, with reference to its notes verbales dated 28 September and 15 October 1997, has the honour to inform it of the following:

Burundi has once again been the victim of armed aggression by the Tanzanian army during the night of 26 to 27 October 1997, in other words one month to the day after the attacks perpetrated by that same army on 26, 27 and 28 September 1997.

The Tanzanian army carried out attacks in the villages of Mukerezi, Gihoro and Mugina in Makamba province. The bombardment of those villages, which began at 3 a.m., continued throughout the morning and even into the afternoon of 27 October 1997. All the shots were fired from Tanzanian territory, from Tanzanian patrol boats, from the police station at Manyovu, from the Tanzanian military position at Kigo and from Kagunga.

All this bombardment was in preparation for a full attack, which was carried out, in the afternoon of 27 October, by armed land elements from the United Republic of Tanzania against the village of Kabonga.

The provisional casualty list from all these acts of aggression is as follows:

Two soldiers and a dozen civilians, including women and children, killed;

Three soldiers and several civilians wounded;

Considerable material damage.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi once again registers a strong protest against the repeated murderous attacks by the Tanzanian army against Burundi and demands that the Tanzanian Government put a stop to them immediately and compensate the families of all the victims of these various acts of armed aggression.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi would like, on the one hand, to draw the attention of the Tanzanian Government to its responsibility for the deterioration in relations between the two countries, and, on the other, to inform it that, in the face of these repeated acts of aggression, which form part of a consistent policy of provocation, Burundi will assume its responsibilities.